UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social Council

PROVISIONAL

For participants only

E/1991/SR.14
5 June 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

First regular session of 1991

PROVISIONAL SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 14th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Friday, 31 May 1991, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. SILOVIĆ (Yugoslavia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.45 p.m.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS (E/1991/L.17/Add.1)

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) reminded the Council that if it adopted draft resolution III entitled "Enlargement of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs", elections would be held in the afternoon of Friday, 21 June 1991, to fill the 10 vacancies. He drew attention to an error in the provisional agenda in that the provisional agenda for the second regular session of 1991 was to be considered at the present meeting.

The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council wished to approve the proposed schedule of work contained in document E/1991/L.17/Add.1, as orally revised.

It was so decided.

CONSIDERATION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SECOND REGULAR SESSION OF 1991 (E/1991/L.20)

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that in adopting the resolution on emergency assistance to Somalia mentioned in document E/1991/L.21/Rev.1, paragraph 10, the Council had decided to ask the Secretary-General, in view of the urgency of the matter, to report to the Economic and Social Council during its second regular session. The Secretariat had suggested that that report should be considered under item 17, Special economic and humanitarian assistance.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community, recalled that during the informal consultations he had proposed that agenda items 15, 16, 17, 18 and part of 12 should be clustered as part of a broad discussion of issues relevant to emergency relief, refugees, displaced persons and returnees. The rationale for that proposal was that under various agenda items reports were to be considered on the capacity of the United Nations system to deal with disasters and, under agenda item 12, with

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

refugees, displaced persons and returnees. All such issues be should clustered and the Council should at the same time discuss the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, rather than merely transmitting it to the General Assembly without debate, so as to make the discussion as full as possible.

The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council approved the suggestion of the Netherlands representative, that the report of the High Commissioner for Refugees should be discussed.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT said that if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Committee wished to approve the draft provisional agenda for the second regular session of the Council (E/1991/L.20, sect. I), as revised.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew attention to section II of document E/1991/L.20, dealing with the organization of work for the second regular session of 1991.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) pointed out that a separate provisional agenda and organization of work would be issued for the Special High-level Meeting at ministerial level to be held on 4 and 5 July, which therefore was not mentioned in the agenda just adopted. Given that the agency heads would participate in that meeting, and since the July agenda was very full, it was thought that the Council might wish to dispense with the one-day informal exchange of views normally scheduled to follow the general debate.

Statements by the Executive Secretaries of the regional commissions, originally scheduled for the morning of Thursday, 11 July, were to be heard instead on Tuesday, 9 July.

It was suggested that, for convenience, item 6, International cooperation to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the disaster at Chernobyl, originally scheduled to be discussed at 3 p.m. on Tuesday, 16 July, be considered instead on Monday, 22 July.

Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) suggested that, as the Special High-level Meetings were an integral part of the Economic and Social Council, they should be listed for 4 and 5 July instead of the "No meeting" entries.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that the Council had decided that the special meeting should be separate from the regular meetings of the Council. Accordingly, the Secretariat had thought it inappropriate to include it in the programme of work now under discussion.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community, said that the Tunisian suggestion was acceptable. Moreover, the general debate might take less time than the alloted four days; two and a half days might be sufficient, if the speakers' list was initially opened for that period, and only extended once all available meeting time had been filled.

All of the reports of the Committee on Development Planning were to be considered during the general debate, but that Committee had been studying developments in eastern Europe and their effects on the world economy and especially that of the developing countries, discussion of which might more appropriately take place during the High-level Meeting. Moreover, the Committee had been studying criteria for identifying the least developed countries, and it might be better to consider that issue under a specific agenda item, such as item 8.

He reiterated his proposal that questions relating to humanitarian assistance should be clustered for consideration. Specifically, two reports to be reviewed under agenda item 12, namely a report on refugees, displaced persons and returnees, and the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the same question, could usefully be combined with agenda items 15, 16, 17 and 18, so that the whole issue could be more thoroughly considered.

It would be useful to have some information on the organization of the High-level Meeting, so that representatives' capitals could be apprised of the proposed arrangements.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that with respect to the length of the general discussion on international economic and social policy, paragraph 8 of document E/1991/L.20 stipulated that the discussion should not exceed four days. In addition, he noted that the pertinent chapters of the report of the Committee for Development Planning would be made available for the discussion on East-West relations.

(Mr. Stoby)

For the Special High-level Meeting, whose provisional agenda and organization of work would be issued the following week, four documents would be available: (1) the report of the Secretary-General on the impact of the recent evolution of East-West relations on the growth of the world economy, in particular on the economic growth and development of the developing countries, as well as on international economic cooperation (E/1991/82); (2) chapter 6 of the World Economic Survey, 1991 (E/1991/75); (3) pertinent sections of the report of the Committee for Development Planning on its twenty-seventh session (E/1991/32, Supp. No. 11); and (4) a summary of the economic survey of Europe, 1990-1991 (E/1991/64). Also available would be the note verbale of 13 May 1991 from the representative of Algeria transmitting the Declaration of the Algiers Colloquium (E/1991/78). The Bureau of the Council had decided that the Special High-level Meeting would have a separate Bureau, consisting of representatives of the same States that composed the Bureau of the Council, but at the ministerial level. Two formal sessions of the Meeting would be held on 4 and 5 July, and a closed meeting for the heads of delegations and representatives of specialized agencies would be held on the afternoon of 5 July.

Mr. TSUI (Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation) said that with respect to the question on the report of the Committee for Development Planning, and specifically on the review of criteria for identifying the least developed countries, the Council's traditional practice had been to address that issue under agenda item 2 (general discussion). It could also be addressed under agenda item 8 (a) in the context of the Council's consideration of the report of the Trade and Development Board. That was for the Council to decide.

With respect to the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands to cluster the items on United Nations capacity for humanitarian response, he noted that since sub-items (a) and (b) of item 16 were very specific, it might be desirable to hold a separate discussion on those two sub-items.

Mr. MACEDO (Mexico) asked whether, if the date of the discussion on item 6 was changed as proposed, the date for the closure of the list of

(Mr. Macedo, Mexico)

speakers for that item would also be changed. In addition, he wished to know how the change would affect the rest of the schedule of meetings.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that if the proposal to hold the discussion on item 6 on the morning of 22 July was accepted, the deadlines for inscription on the list of speakers and for the submission of draft proposals would be adjusted accordingly. The change would not affect the rest of the schedule of meetings.

Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Bahrain) asked for clarification of the reference in paragraph 10 of document E/1991/L.20 to dispensing with the one-day informal exchange of views.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that the Council was required, under its resolution 1989/114, to hold an informal exchange of views with the heads of specialized agencies on the issues raised in the general discussion. However, since two additional occasions for an exchange of views (on the report of the South Commission and on the economic, social and environmental consequences of the situation between Iraq and Kuwait) had been scheduled for the second regular session of 1991, an exchange of views on the general discussion might not be necessary.

Mr. ABOU-HADID (Syrian Arab Republic), supported by Mrs. HASSAN (Observer for Egypt), noted that only one meeting had been scheduled, on the morning of 16 July, on agenda item 5 regarding permanent sovereignty over national resources in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories. Since the meeting originally scheduled for the afternoon of that day was to be held on 22 July, he proposed that the afternoon of 16 July should be devoted to continued consideration of item 5, given the vital importance of the issue.

Ms. HJELT af TROLLE (Sweden) said she supported the proposal of the representative of the Netherlands concerning the clustering of the items on the capacity of the United Nations to respond to emergency situations. Since existing documents on emergency-related issues would be relevant to the discussion, she wondered whether the Secretariat could reissue those documents.

Mr. BRITO CRUZ (Brazil), supported by Mr. NIETO (Argentina), said that he disagreed with the suggestion that the Council should dispense with the informal exchange of views on the general discussion because the main focus of the general discussion would be on multilateral cooperation in international economic affairs, which was directly linked to the work of many United Nations bodies; an exchange of views with the executive heads of those bodies would therefore be of particular importance. Since the draft programme of work made no provision for the traditional one-day informal exchange of views following the general discussion, it would have to be revised if the other Council members agreed that such an exchange of views should not be omitted. The Council could leave the question open for the moment and return to it at its resumed session in June.

Mr. MACEDO (Mexico) said that the exchange of views should be returned for the time being, on the understanding that the proposed change would be introduced in 1992.

Mr. MAQUIEIRA (Chile) said he would favour a flexible approach to the issue of dispensing with the informal exchange of views; the decision could be taken in the light of the time to be spent on the general debate.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands), responding to the comment by the representative of the Office of the Director-General, said he recognized that items 16 (a) and (b) were indeed very specific; however, he was not convinced that they therefore needed to be debated separately.

He would also welcome more information on the informal session of the High-level Meeting. Would specific subjects be dealt with, and was it to be a negotiating session? He also asked what the proposed outcome of the meeting was and whether a presidential summation was aimed for.

The PRESIDENT said that the informal session of the High-level Meeting was not a negotiating meeting, and no documentation would result. The President of the High-level Meeting would make his own resume of the discussion, but participants in the informal meeting would discuss what they saw fit.

Mr. AL-FAIHANI (Bahrain), referring to agenda item 5, said he did not understand why the meetings had been reduced to a single meeting. He also did not understand why documents were being distributed so late.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said there were not usually several meetings on the Palestinian issue. However, the Council was free to decide that two or more meetings should be held, if it so wished.

The PRESIDENT said he took it that there was agreement in the Council to reduce the general debate to two and half days, if possible, using part of the time thus saved for an informal exchange of views with the heads of agencies, and to cluster the discussion of items 15, 16, 17, 18 and part of 12. Moreover, if item 6 (Chernobyl) were moved to 22 July, there would be enough time to discuss item 5 (Palestine) on 16 July.

Mr. KHALIKOV (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) said it would be difficult on such short notice for his country to agree to shifting the discussion of the Chernobyl issue to another time-slot, as it intended to send high-level special representatives to participate. He asked the Council to consider keeping the programme of work as it presently was.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said the Chernobyl agenda item could be moved to the afternoon of 15 July, the item on revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries could be moved to the morning of 16 July, and discussion of the Palestinian item could begin on the afternoon of 16 July, with a second meeting allocated for the morning of 17 July.

Mr. BRITO CRUZ (Brazil) said that it was important to have an informal exchange of views with the executive heads; however, the Council need not take a decision immediately. A flexible approach should be taken, so that a way could be found to schedule the informal exchange of views without shortening the general discussion.

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands) said that the Secretariat should be allowed some flexibility in scheduling the informal exchange of views with the executive heads; however, the exchange of views should take place during the time allotted for the general discussion.

Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia) said that he fully agreed with the representative of Brazil on the need for flexibility. In any event, paragraph 10 of document E/1991/L.20 would have to be revised to reflect the change in the draft programme of work.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that it would be possible to schedule an extended afternoon meeting on 10 July in order to hold the informal exchange of views with the executive heads.

The PRESIDENT said that the suggestion by the Secretary was helpful because it would enable the Council to hold the informal exchange of views with the executive heads without shortening the general discussion. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council decided to approve the draft programme of work of the second regular session of 1991 (E/1991/L.20, sect. II), as orally revised.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT drew the Council's attention to section III of document E/1991/L.20, on the status of documentation for the second regular session as at 22 May 1991.

Mr. Al-FAIHANI (Bahrain) inquired when the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli land and water policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories under provisional agenda item 5 would be submitted. In that connection, he stressed the need to give delegations ample time to consider the relevant documentation.

Ms. HJELT af TROLLE (Sweden) recalled that she had asked whether earlier documents on emergency-related items could be reissued.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that the report of the Secretary-General on Israeli land and water policies and practices in the occupied Palestinian and other Arab territories would be issued in three weeks under the symbol E/1991/88. He would be happy to consult with the representative of Sweden and have relevant documents made available as background or reference documents.

Mr. JOMAA (Tunisia), referring to the documentation for item 18 of the provisional agenda, said that the note verbale from the Permanent Mission of Algeria containing the Declaration of the Algiers Colloquium and other relevant United Nations documents should be made available for consideration by the Special High-level Meeting.

Mr. STOBY (Secretary of the Council) said that that would be done.

The PRESIDENT said that, if he heard no objection, he would take it that the Council took note of the status of documentation as at 22 May 1991, as contained in section III of document E/1991/L.20.

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5.35 p.m.